



CSB IAS ACADEMY

THE ROAD MAP TO MUSSORRIE...

PRELIMS EDGE – 2025 – 03/02/2025

UDAN SCHEME

Context: The Finance Minister announced in her Budget speech that 120 new destinations will be launched in the next ten years under the UDAN Scheme.



UDAN SCHEME

About UDAN Scheme:

- The scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** for regional airport development and regional connectivity enhancement.
- It is a **part of the National Civil Aviation Policy 2016** and is applicable for a period of 10 years.
- Aim: Expand access to **air travel for Tier 2 & Tier 3 cities** and shift traffic pattern away from Metro routes.

Key Features:

- Under the scheme, airlines have to **cap airfares for 50% of the total seats at Rs. 2,500 per hour** of flight.
- This would be achieved through:
 - Financial stimulus/concessions from Central & State govts.
 - **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** - A govt grant provided to bridge gap

- between cost of operations and expected revenue.
- **Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF)** was created to meet VGF requirements of the scheme.

Phases of the Scheme:

- **Phase 1** was launched in 2017 to connect underserved and unserved airports in the country.
- **Phase 2** was launched in 2018 to expand air connectivity to more remote and inaccessible parts.
- **Phase 3** was launched in Nov 2018 to enhance air connectivity to hilly and remote regions of the country.
- **Phase 4** was launched in Dec 2019, with a focus on connecting islands and other remote areas of the country.
- **Phase 5** launched in April 2023 with a focus on Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats) aircrafts with no restriction on distance between origin and destination.

Achievements of the Scheme:

- The number of **operational airports has gone up to 141 from 74** in 2014.
- **68 underserved and unserved destinations** which include 58 Airports, 8 Heliports & 2 Water Aerodromes have been connected.
- **425 new routes** initiated, with air connectivity to 29 States/UTs.
- **More than 1 crore passengers** have availed the benefits of this scheme.

Status of India's Aviation Sector

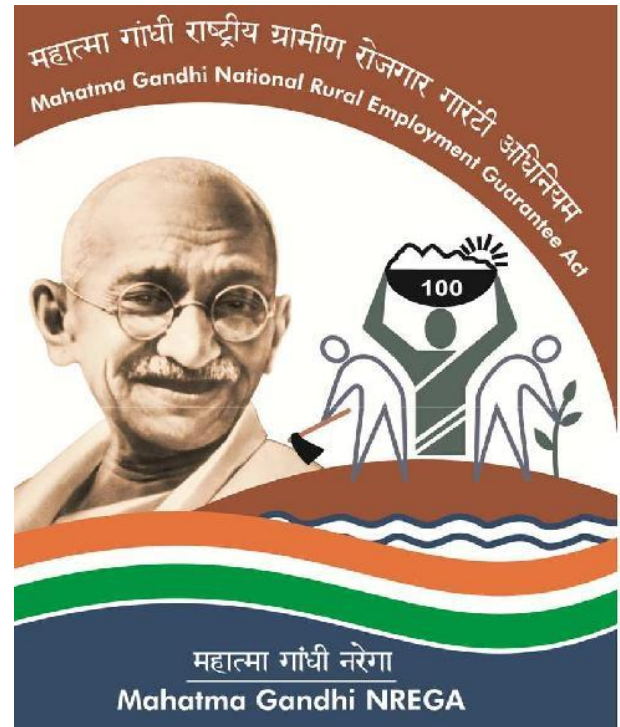
- ✓ Among the fastest-growing aviation markets globally – it is a major growth engine to make India a **USD 5 trillion economy by 2028**.
- ✓ Over the past 6 years - domestic passenger traffic has grown annually at **14.5%** and **international passenger traffic has grown at around 6.5%**.
- ✓ Domestic passenger traffic projected to rise to **16 crores in FY 23/24** and to **35 crores by 29/30**.
- ✓ Fleet size, which rose from **400 to more than 700 in the last ten years**, is set to move upwards of **2,000 by 2035**.
- ✓ In **2023 alone, 1,622 commercial pilot licences** were issued.
- ✓ **Number of airports** has doubled from **74 in 2014 to 148 in 2023**.
- ✓ In 2020, the FDI policy for civil aviation was amended to allow **100% FDI in automatic route**.

Source: Union Budget 2025: 'Modified' UDAN scheme to add 120 destinations over 10 years, says Finance Minister (The Hindu)

MGNREGA

Context: There have been many criticisms against the Union Govt's decision to not increase budgetary allocations for the MGNREGA and its impact on rural economic distress.

About the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):



- MGNREGA is one of the **largest work guarantee programmes** in the world launched in 2005 by the **Ministry of Rural development**.
- It provides a legal guarantee for **one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household** willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- **Active workers:** 14.32 Crore (2023-24)

Major Features:

- The cornerstone of MGNREGA's design is its **legal guarantee**, ensuring that any rural adult can request work and **must receive it within 15 days**. If this commitment is not met, an "**unemployment allowance**" must be provided.
- The Employment is to be provided **within 5 km of applicant's residence**.
- It requires that priority shall be given to women in such a way that **at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women** who have registered and requested for work.

- Section 17 of the MGNREGA has mandated **social audit** of all Works executed under the MGNREGA. This is to be done by the Gram Sabha.
- There is **no limit on the number of people per family** who can enroll for work under the MGRNEGS.

Objective:

- This act was introduced with an aim of improving the Purchasing Power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living below poverty line in rural India.
- It attempts to bridge the gap between the rich and poor in the country.

Achievements of 2022-23:

- 11.37 crore households availed employment.
- 289.24 crore person-days employment has been generated out of which:
 - 56.19% were for women
 - 19.75% were for Scheduled Castes (SCs)
 - 17.47% were for Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Initiatives under MGNREGS:

- ✓ **Amrit Sarovar:** Construction/renovation of at least 75 Amrit Sarovars (ponds) in each district of the country; they will help in increasing the availability of water, both on surface and under-ground.
- ✓ **Jaldoot App:** It was launched in Sept 2022 for measuring the water level in a Gram Panchayat through 2-3 selected open wells twice a year.
- ✓ **Ombudsperson for MGNREGS:** Ombudsperson App was launched in Feb 2022 for smooth reporting

and categorization of grievances received from various sources related to the implementation of the MGNREGS.

Source: Congress slams government for stagnant MGNREGS budget, warns of worsening rural distress (The Indian Express)

PMLA, 2002

Context: The ED has attached multiple overseas assets in cases of money laundering against various high-profile individuals.



About Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002:

- PMLA was **enacted under Article 253**, which empowers Parliament to make laws for implementing international conventions. It was enacted in pursuance of two treaties to which India was a party:
 - **UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1998**
 - **UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000 (Palermo Convention)**

Key Provisions of PMLA

- **Offences & Penalties:** Defines money laundering offences and imposes penalties for such activities - rigorous imprisonment and fines for offenders.

- **Attachment and Confiscation of Property:** Allows for attachment and confiscation of property involved in money laundering. It establishes an Adjudicating Authority to oversee these proceedings.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Mandates certain entities, such as banks and financial institutions, to maintain records of transactions and report suspicious transactions to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).
- **Designated Authority and Appellate Tribunal:** Establishes a Designated Authority to assist in investigation and prosecution. It also provides for the establishment of an Appellate Tribunal to hear appeals against orders of the Adjudicating Authority.
 - **Appeals against decisions of the PMLA Appellate Tribunal lie to the High Courts.**
- **For Cryptocurrencies:** Virtual digital assets (VDA) trade has been brought under PMLA. New rules mandate crypto exchanges and intermediaries dealing in virtual assets to maintain the KYCs of their clients and report suspicious transactions to FIU.
- **Due diligence documentation for companies:** It has been expanded to include the submission of details such as names of persons holding senior positions, names of partners, etc.
- **Beneficial Owners:** Lowered the threshold for identifying beneficial owners by reporting entities, where the client is acting on behalf of its beneficial owner.
 - 'Beneficial owners' are those entitled to more than 25% of shares/capital/profit – this has now been reduced to 10%.
- **NPOs:** Reporting entities have to register details of the client on DARPAN portal of NITI Aayog if it is a non-profit organization (NPO).

Amendments to PMLA in 2023

- **Clarification about Proceeds of Crime:** Proceeds of the Crime not only includes property derived from the offence but now also includes any other property derived or obtained from any criminal activity relatable or similar to the alleged offence.
- **Money Laundering Redefined:** Money Laundering was not an independent crime – rather, it depended on another crime, known as predicate offence or scheduled offence. The amendment seeks to treat money laundering as a stand-alone crime.
- **Defines PEPs (Politically Exposed Persons):** Individuals who have been entrusted with prominent public functions by a foreign country.

Enforcement Directorate (ED)

- ✓ It is a domestic law enforcement & economic intelligence agency. It is responsible for **enforcing economic laws & fighting economic crimes.**
- ✓ Its origin goes back to **May 1956**, when an "enforcement unit" was formed for the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act. In 1957, it was renamed as ED.
- ✓ **Nodal Agency: Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**
- ✓ The ED enforces three Acts:
 - **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)**

- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002**
- **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA).**

Source: ED's crackdown on overseas 'illegal' wealth: assets worth about ₹16,000 crore in 16 foreign jurisdictions attached (The Hindu)

NATIONAL MISSION ON NATURAL FARMING

Context: The 'National Mission on Natural Farming' got a major boost as its allocation increased by Rs 516 crore - from Rs 100 crore in 2024-25 to Rs 616 crore in Budget 2025-26.

About Natural Farming:

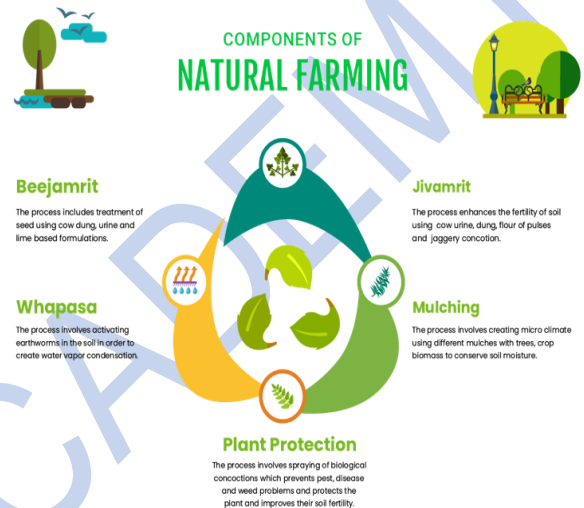
- Natural farming is an agricultural practice that emphasizes **minimal intervention** and the **use of natural resources** to cultivate crops.
- It seeks to enhance soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem balance without relying on synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, or herbicides.
- It is largely based on **on-farm biomass recycling** with major stress on **biomass mulching**, **use of on-farm cow dung-urine formulations**; maintaining **soil aeration** and **exclusion of all synthetic chemical inputs**.

Aims and Objectives:

- Preserve natural flora and fauna
- Restore soil health and fertility
- Maintain diversity in crop production
- Efficient utilization of land and natural resources

- Promote natural beneficial insects, animals, and microbes
- Promotion of local breeds for livestock integration
- Use of natural/local resources & inputs
- Reduce input cost for farmers
- Improve economics of farmers

Components:



About National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF):

- It **replaces the Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP)**, which was launched in 2019 as a sub-mission under the **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY)**.
- The PKVY is a part of the centrally sponsored umbrella scheme of **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture** (which is one of the eight missions under India's National Action Plan on Climate Change).
- The Union Govt. also promoted natural farming in a five-kilometer belt along the Ganga River under the Namami Gange scheme in 2022-23.
- The govt has now decided to **upscale the experience gained from the BPKP** through the NMNF.
- In the 2024 Budget, the Union Govt. announced a plan to **initiate one crore**

farmers countrywide into natural farming in the **next two years**.

- An overall area of **22 lakh hectares** is presently under natural farming in India, with **34 lakh farmers engaged** in the practice. This includes 4 lakh hectares under BPKP and 88,000 hectares under Namami Gange. About **17 lakh hectares are covered under various state government initiatives** to promote natural farming.
- The NMNF mission aims to bring an **additional 7.5 lakh hectares** of area under natural farming.
- The scheme has an outlay of Rs. 2,481 crores, of which the union govt will contribute Rs.1584 crore, till the **15th Finance Commission period (2025-26)**.
- Under NMNF, around **2000 Natural Farming Model Demonstration Farms shall be established** at Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Agricultural Universities (AUs) and farmers' fields, and shall be supported by experienced and trained **Farmer Master Trainers**.

Source: Budget 2025-26: Major boost to National Mission on Natural Farming (Down to Earth)

TERMS IN NEWS

Fentanyl

- **USA has imposed tariffs on China, partly citing China's role in the fentanyl crisis**, with the US accusing China of failing to curb the export of fentanyl precursors to the USA.
- Fentanyl is a **potent synthetic opioid drug approved for use in the USA** as an analgesic (pain relief) & anesthetic. It is 100 times more potent than morphine


and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic.

- Opioids have an **instantaneous effect**



that wears off quickly, necessitating regular use. People who start taking opioid-based painkillers frequently develop addictions.

- The **US has seen a huge spike in synthetic opioid-related deaths since 2013**, largely due to the rapid proliferation of illicitly manufactured fentanyl. **Fentanyl is increasingly cut into other drugs**, often without the buyers' knowledge.
- The **US has primarily blamed Mexico and China for the trafficking of fentanyl**. As per a 2020 FBI Report, fentanyl and related substances are trafficked from China through international mail and express consignment operations.
- Several Chinese companies are involved in the manufacturing of chemicals used to create synthetic opioids (precursors). These are shipped to Mexico for processing into pills and then sent to the US. It is **alleged that China indirectly subsidizes fentanyl production through tax rebates to companies**.

 Opioids are a class of drugs that are derived from or mimic the effect of natural substances found in the poppy plant. Common opioids include heroin, oxycodone, morphine, codeine and fentanyl.

Mithila Makhana



- The Finance Minister announced in the Budget that a **“Makhana Board” will be set up in Bihar** to improve production, processing, value addition, and marketing of makhana
- Makhana is an **important aquatic crop**. It is **grown in stagnant perennial water bodies** like ponds, land depressions, oxbow lakes, swamps and ditches.
- **Mithila Makhana** or Makhan is a special variety of aquatic fox nut cultivated in **Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal**.
- The Mithila Makhana was awarded a **GI Tag in 2022**.
- In July 2024, **Bihar requested the Union Govt. to declare a Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for makhana.
- **Bihar contributes 85% of India’s makhana production**, involving around 10 lakh people, primarily from poorer backgrounds.

PLACES IN NEWS

Sudan

- **Millions of civilians in Sudan are on the brink of famine and starvation** due to the Sudanese Civil War, which has been going on since April 2023.



- Sudan is a country located in North Africa, bordered by **Egypt (north), Libya (northwest), Chad (west), the Central African Republic (southwest), South Sudan (south), Ethiopia (south east) & Eritrea (east)**. It shares a **maritime border with the Red Sea**.
- Sudan is the **3rd largest country in Africa** and has an ethnically diverse population of 43 million people. Its **capital and biggest city is Khartoum**.
- The **Darfur region of Sudan** has been facing insurgency and violent attacks by terrorists for over two decades.
- In **April 2023, India launched “Operation Kaveri”** to evacuate its citizens after the civil war had begun in Sudan.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the civil aviation sector in India:

1. The UDAN Scheme was launched as part of the National Civil Aviation Policy of 2016.
2. In the last 10 years, the number of operational airports in India have doubled.
3. 100% FDI under automatic route is permitted in the civil aviation sector in India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the MGNREGS:

1. Upon request by a person for work, states are mandated to provide it within a period of 30 days.
2. States can impose a limit on the number of persons from one single household who can register under MGNREGS.
3. It is mandatory that at least one-third of the overall beneficiaries of MGNREGS are women.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q3. Consider the following GI tagged food items from India and the area where they are cultivated:

1. Mithila Makhana: Bihar
2. Sea Buckthorn: Ladakh
3. Cumbum Grapes: Karnataka
4. Kalanamak Rice: Uttar Pradesh

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) of 2002:

1. PMLA was enacted in pursuance of India's ratification of certain UN Conventions.
2. Non-profit organizations are excluded from the ambit of the PMLA.
3. Appeals against the decisions of the PMLA Appellate Authority lie to the High Courts.

Which of the afore mentioned statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. Consider the following nations located in Asia and Africa:

1. Djibouti
2. Jordan
3. Oman

4. Eritrea
5. Ethiopia
6. Sudan
7. Yemen

Which of these nations share a border with the Red Sea?

- (a) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
- (b) 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7
- (c) 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7
- (d) 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7

Answers:

1. D
2. A
3. C
4. B
5. D